Jesse, others demand new probes of Panther deaths

By Alan Merridew

THE REV. Jesse Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, yesterday demanded new federal and state investigations into federal officials' involvement in the 1969 raid on Chicago Black Panther Party headquarters, which led to the death of party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

The Rev. Mr. Jackson and several other black leaders said a paid informer of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who infiltrated the Panthers in 1969 has been identified. They said this gives rise to the possibility that federal officials who knew about the informer's role could be indicted on federal charges of denial of civil rights and state charges of murder and obstruction of justice.

The identity of the informer, William O'Neal Jr., came to light during the June police "hit squad" trial of Stanley B. Robinson. A federal judge Friday ordered O'Neal to testify in a civil suit arising out of the Panther raid.

PROF. Herbert O. Reid, acting dean of the Howard University Law School, said federal officials from then U. S. Atty. Gen. John Mitchell and his successor Richard G. Kleindienst down to Thomas Foran, then U. S. attorney in Chicago, and local FBI agents knew or should have known about the informer.

He said federal officials should have called the informer before a federal grand jury that investigated the Panther raid.

Hampton and Clark were killed during a raid by state's attorney police on an apartment at 2337 W. Monroe St.

Edward Hanrahan, then state's attorney and now a possible candidate for Congress, and 13 others were acquitted in October, 1972, of conspiring to obstruct justice after the raid.

The Rev. Mr. Jackson and others said county officials also might be indicted for murder, depending on the role the informer played in the Panther raid.

REID SAID O'Neal may have been an "agent provocateur." He said government records might "indicate stimulation, suggestion of criminal activity, and engaging in criminal activity . . . where the guns came from, how they got into that apartment."

"It may well be," Reid said, "that the guns in question, the guns that made the raid legal, came from the Police Department. They may not have been stolen. It may have been deliberate."

Thomas Todd, a Chicago lawyer and consultant to Operation PUSH, called on Congress to appoint an independent special prosecutor to get to the bottom of the Panther raid case.

The Rev. Mr. Jackson and the others made their demands in a press conference at Operation PUSH [People United to Save Humanity] headquarters, 930 E. 50th St.

U. S. Atty. James R. Thompson said that he had no plans to reopen the case of Hampton and Clark because neither the Rev. Mr. Jackson nor anyone else has presented new evidence that would warrant an investigation. He said that the identification of an FBI informer did not mean that the informer played a significant part in the case.

Paper boosts price

DES MOINES, Dec. 9 [UPI] — The Des Moines Sunday Register announced today it will increase its newsstand price by a nickel, to 40 cents, beginning the first of the year to meet rising production costs.

Tribune Photo by Ovie Carter

The Rev. Jesse Jackson at yesterday's press conference. With him are Mr. and Mrs. Francis Hampton, Fred Hampton's parents, and his brother, William.

Chgo Trib 12/11/73